

FIG. 1

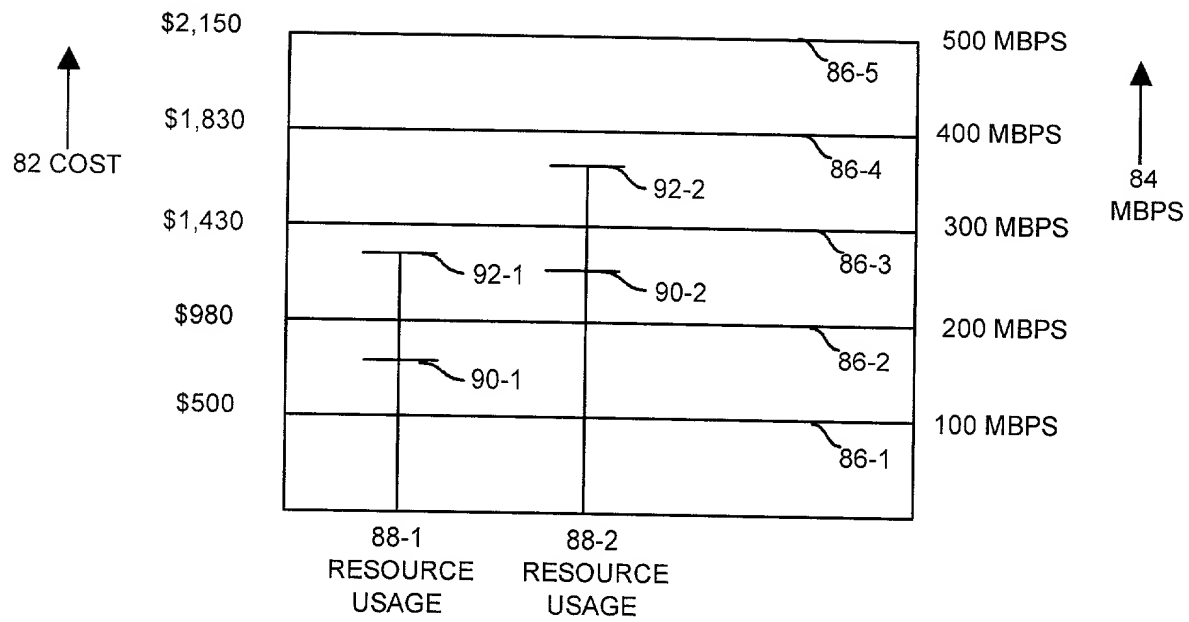


FIG. 2A

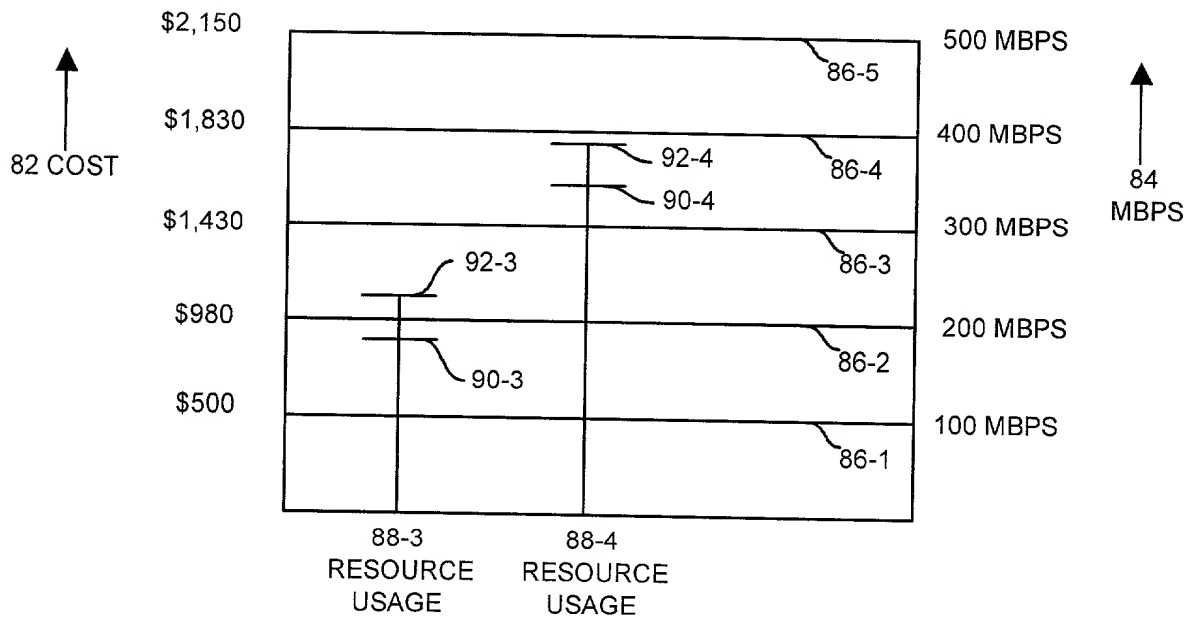


FIG. 2B

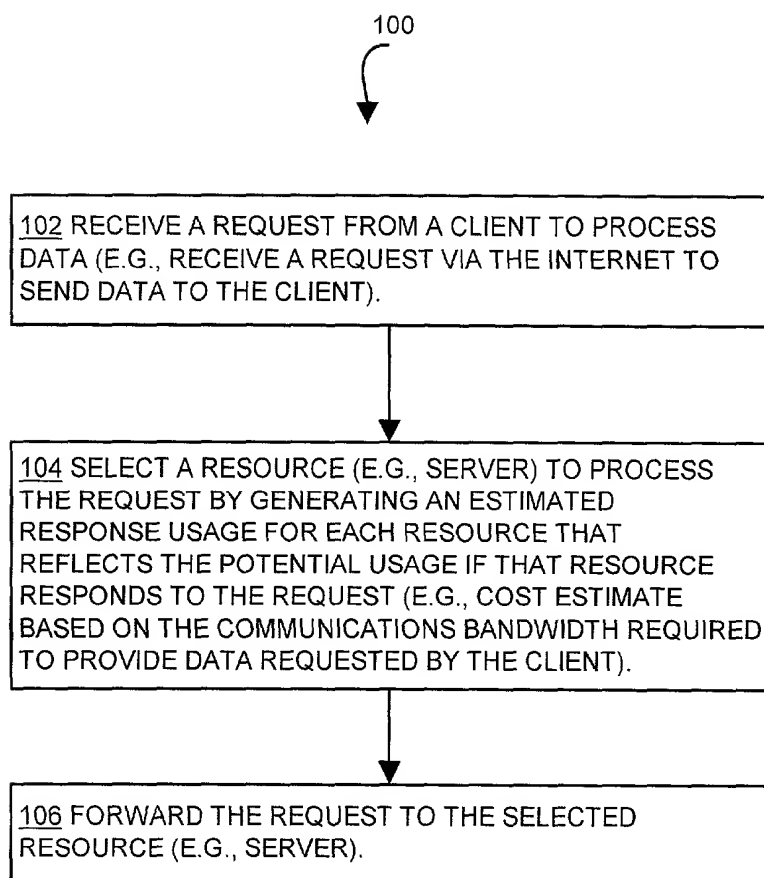


FIG. 3A

200

202 RECEIVE A REQUEST FROM A CLIENT TO PROCESS DATA (E.G., RECEIVE A REQUEST VIA THE INTERNET TO SEND DATA FROM A SERVER TO THE CLIENT).

204 GENERATE COST INCREASES FOR EACH RESOURCE (E.G., SERVER) IF EACH RESOURCE RESPONDS TO THE REQUEST FROM THE CLIENT (E.G., ADDITIONAL COST FOR EACH SERVER TO PROVIDE THE DATA REQUESTED BY THE CLIENT).

206 COMPARE THE COST INCREASES TO DETERMINE WHICH COST INCREASE HAS THE LOWEST COST INCREMENT (E.G., LOWEST ADDITIONAL COST TO PROVIDE THE DATA TO THE CLIENT).

208 SELECT ONE OF THE RESOURCES (E.G., SERVERS) BASED ON THE RESOURCE HAVING THE LOWEST COST INCREMENT.

210 SEND THE REQUEST TO THE SELECTED RESOURCE (E.G., SERVER) TO RESPOND TO THE CLIENT'S REQUEST (E.G., PROVIDE REQUESTED DATA TO THE CLIENT).

FIG. 3B

300

302 RECEIVE A REQUEST FROM A CLIENT TO PROCESS DATA (E.G., RECEIVE A REQUEST VIA THE INTERNET TO SEND DATA FROM A SERVER TO THE CLIENT).

304 GENERATE A USAGE METRIC FOR EACH RESOURCE (E.G., AMOUNT OF CURRENT USAGE AS INDICATED BY A USAGE METER FOR EACH RESOURCE).

306 GENERATE AN ECONOMIC METRIC FOR EACH RESOURCE BASED ON THE USAGE METRIC FOR EACH RESOURCE AND A REQUEST FOR DATA (E.G., A COST ESTIMATE REFLECTING THE CURRENT USAGE AND ADDITIONAL USAGE FROM THE REQUEST).

308 CHOOSE ONE OF THE RESOURCES TO RESPOND TO THE REQUEST BY COMPARING THE ECONOMIC METRIC FOR EACH RESOURCE (E.G., SELECT A SERVER BY COMPARING THE COST ESTIMATES).

310 SEND THE REQUEST TO THE CHOSEN RESOURCE (E.G., SERVER) TO RESPOND TO THE CLIENT'S REQUEST (E.G., PROVIDE REQUESTED DATA TO THE CLIENT).

FIG. 3C

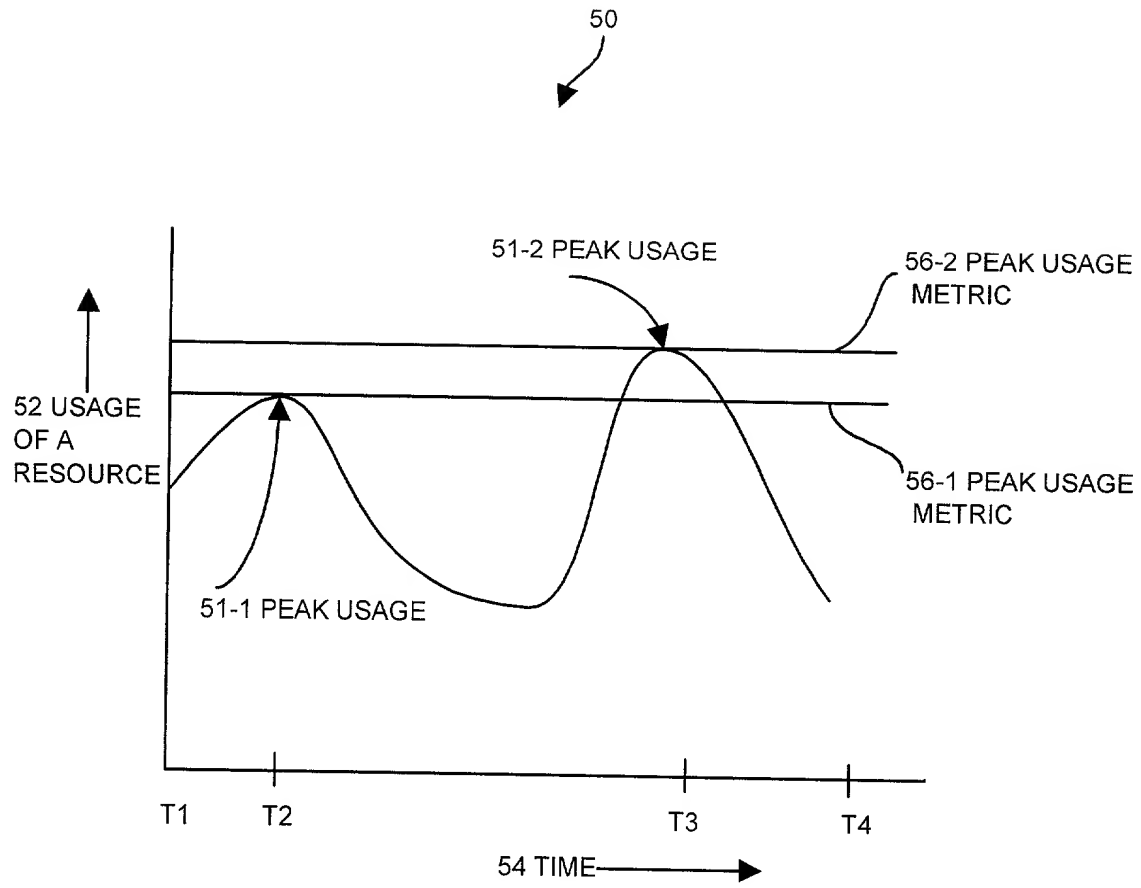


FIG. 4

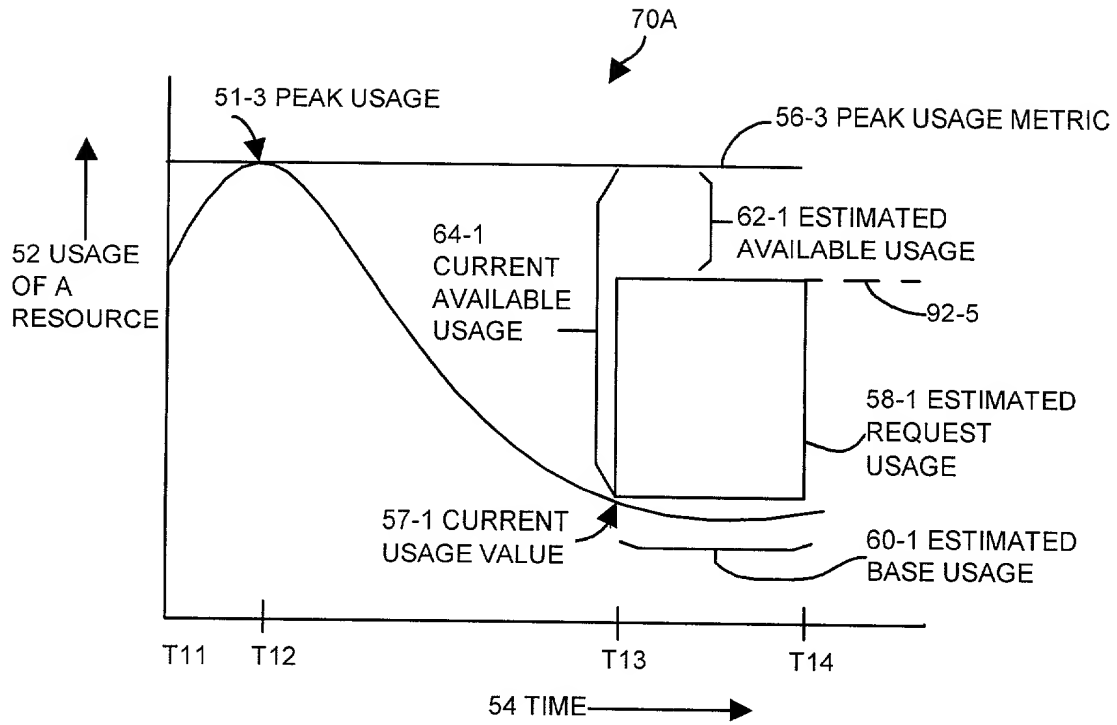


FIG. 5A

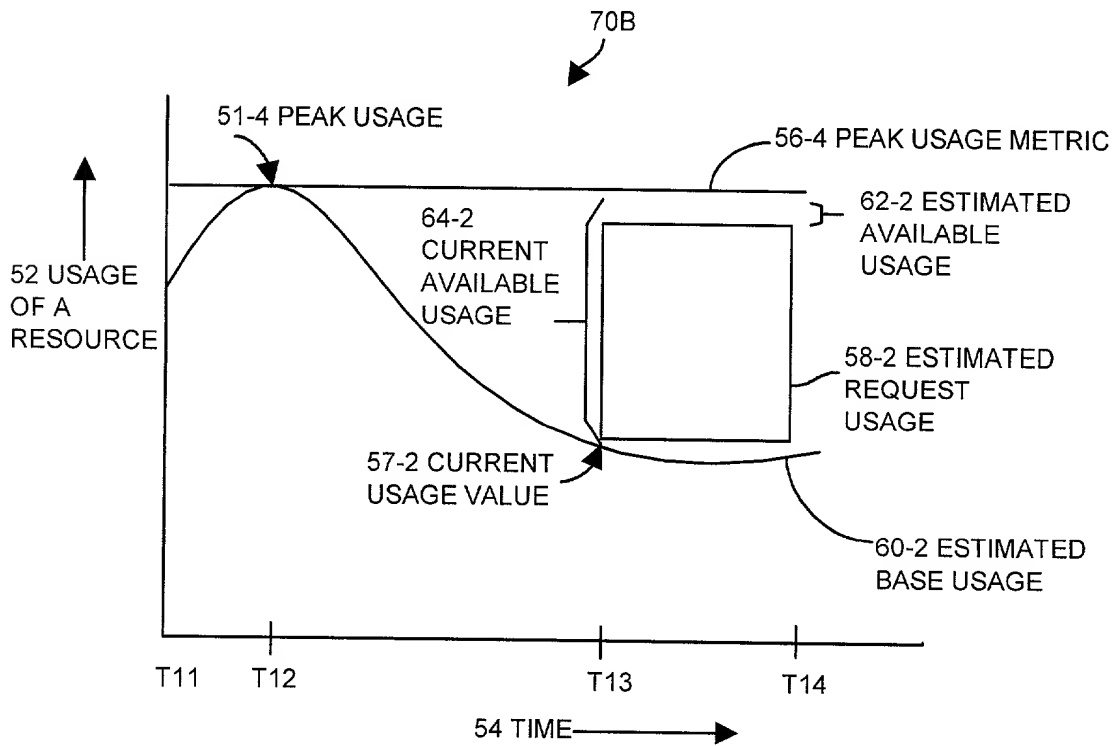


FIG. 5B

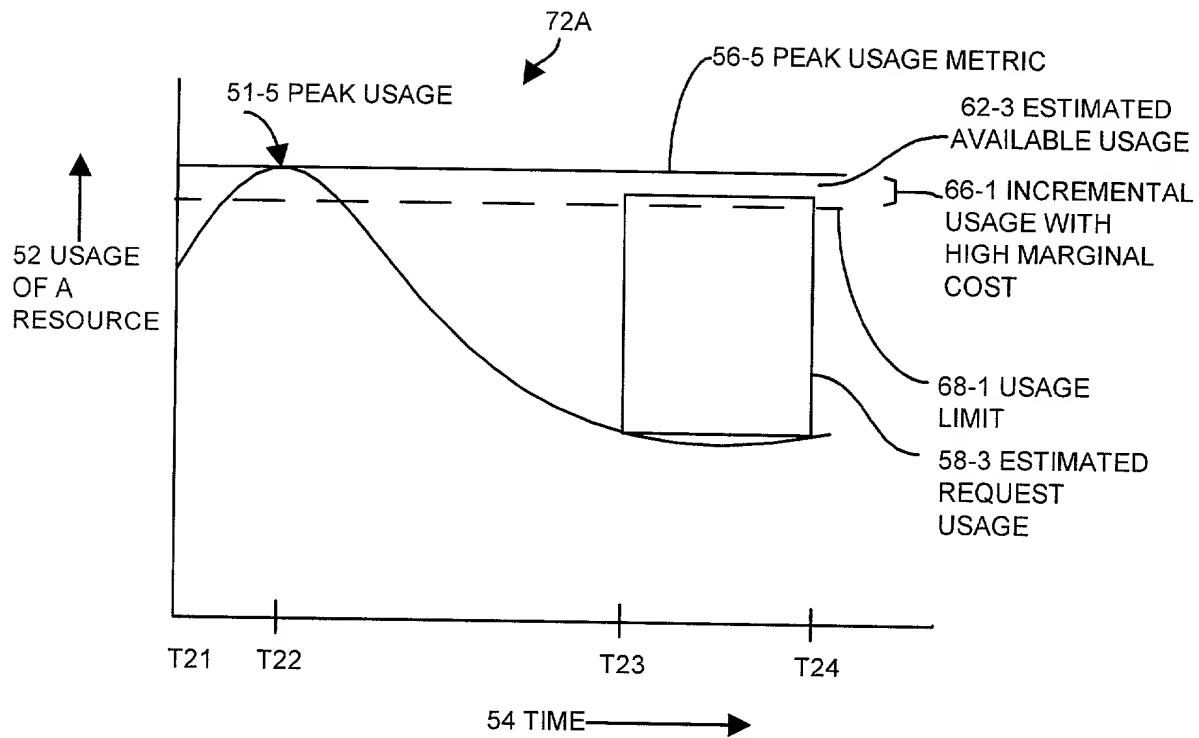


FIG. 6A

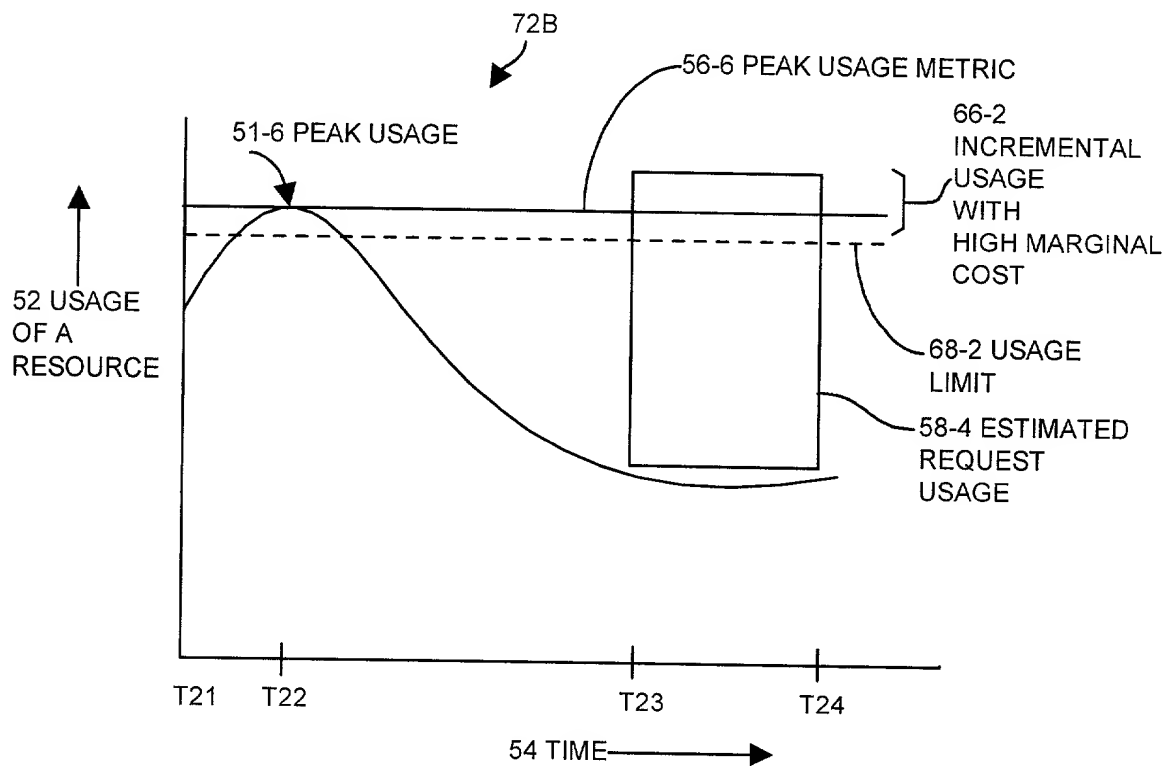


FIG. 6B